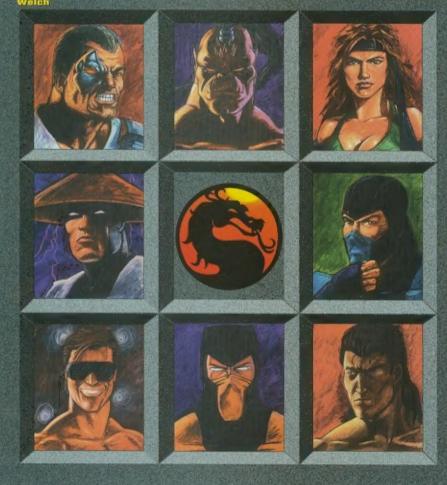
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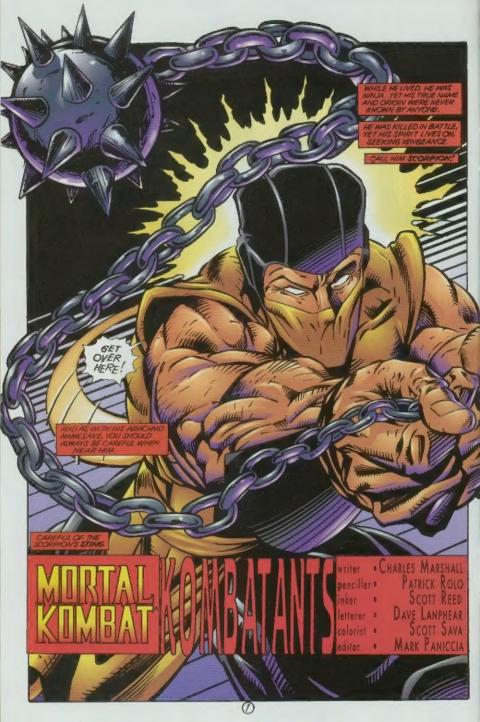


MORTAL KOMBAT



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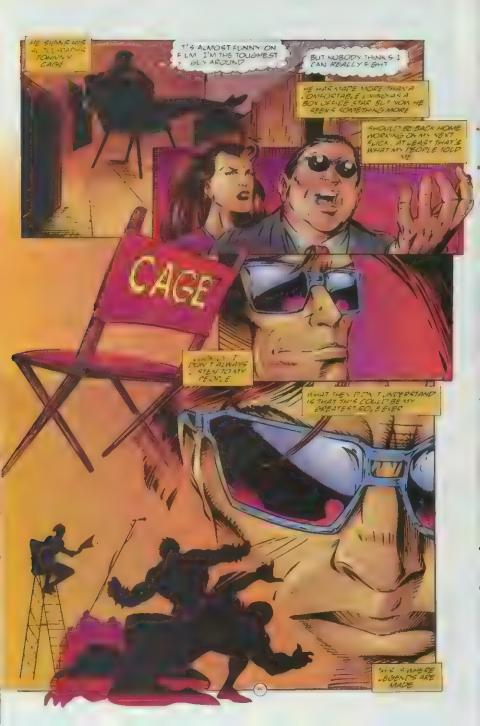


















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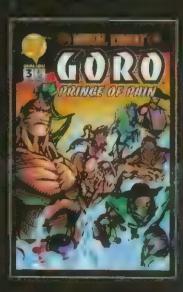
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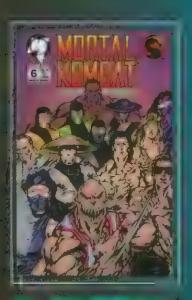
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Mortal Kombat #6

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John Tobias (Right) and Ed Boon (Left) Co Designers of Mortal Kombat the Video Game



The MORTAL KOMBAT® of John Tobias An Interview with the Co-designer of MORTAL KOMBAT

By Robert J. Sodaro

You've got the hottest areade game on the planet burning up the charts and crushing all opposition. You've successfully translated it and put it into a one-shot mail-order comic, and the home video game market. You've just released the Mortal Kombat II video game, the sequel to your still best-selling Mortal Kombat, and there's talk about a live-action tour as well as a live-action movie. What now? Well, if you're John Tobias and Ed Boon, why not turn it into a Malibu comic book as well?

Sodaro: Could you tell us a little of the background of how you developed Mortal Kombat? Tobias: Ed and I wanted to do a fighting game, similar to a game called Karate Champ. We wanted to do a game that had head-to-head fighting in it. We threw that idea around a little bit, then we put our proposal in. We were both working on other projects at the time so it was going to be a while before we got started. Then a game called Street Fighter II came out that was exactly the head-to-head fighting that we wanted to do and that was successful enough that it spurred our people here enough to say, "Go ahead, do a fighting game." We finished the projects we were working on and started working on it.

Sodaro: When was that?

Tobias: That was in '91. The first game took us eight or nine months, which is pretty quick for a video game. Normally it takes a little over a year.

Sodaro: Does it disturb you at all that people are claiming your game is way too violent? Or is that just people overreacting?

Tobias: It's media hype. I think violence is an issue when it comes to an eight-year old playing the game, but an eight-year old shouldn't be playing the game. Acclaim, the company that released it for the home, did everything they could. Sega put ratings on it. They took the gory parts of the game out of the Nintendo version. They did everything they could to address the issue. If a parent thinks it's too violent for their nine-year old then they shouldn't buy it. It's a \$70.00 game. No kid is walking into Toys 'R Us, plopping seventy bucks down, and buying the game.

Sodaro: Can you give us some tips on how to play the game?

Tobias: (Pause) Practice. There's all kinds of secret moves and stuff. That's more a question geared to my partner who knows most of that stuff. In Mortal Kombat II--I think all the hidden stuff in Mortal Kombat has been figured out--but in the second game there's tons of stuff that we buried under the game.

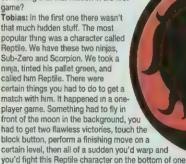
Sodaro: Like what, for instance? Can you give us any clues?

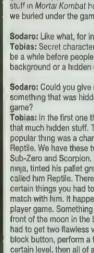
Tobias: Secret characters, and there's a lot of little things that you can do that it's going to be a while before people figure out how to find a hidden

background or a hidden character.

Sodaro: Could you give us an example of something that was hidden in the first

Tobias: In the first one there wasn't that much hidden stuff. The most popular thing was a character called Reptile. We have these two ninjas. Sub-Zero and Scorpion, We took a nınıa, tinted his pallet green, and called him Reptile. There were certain things you had to do to get a match with him. It happened in a oneplayer game. Something had to fly in front of the moon in the background, you had to get two flawless victories, touch the block button, perform a finishing move on a certain level, then all of a sudden you'd warp and











INTERVIEW

of the backgrounds called The Pit. It actually wasn't discovered for six months. Some kid miraculously found it by accident.



Sodaro: I would imagine you would have to have some of those things happen by accident.

Tobias: It's amazing because the players are incredible. We've hidden stuff in the second game that we thought they weren't going to find for three months. The game was only out two weeks and somebody found it. There's a lot of these computer networks and they're always putting up new hints. The players are incredible about finding stuff. They haven't found nearly everything that's hidden in the second one yet.

Sodaro: How many things are hidden in the second game?

Tobias: It's kind of vague because fatalities are considered hidden, and I think they found the majority of those. If I said over a hundred that wouldn't be overdoing it.

Sodaro: What's the half-life of an arcade game? How long do they stay hot?

Tobias: A game can be hot for years. Normally what happens is a game will come out and do well for the first couple of months. Then another game will come out. It's like the movies: a movie comes out and it's number one at the box office for a couple of weeks, then another new movie will come out. Mortal Kombat came out and did really well in the arcades. It depends on the arcade, but we've seen Mortal Kombat earn upwards of \$1,600 a week. Mortal Kombat was tops for six or seven months. It was eventually beaten by another game we put out here called NBA Jam! Eventually NBA Jam! slipped and Mortal Kombat was number one again, and that was amazing because that was 14 months later.

Sodare: How did it get translated into a comic book?
Tobias: I had been doing comic books prior to working here.

Sodaro: What were you doing?

Tobias: I hadn't done that much. I did *The Real Ghostbusters* for Now Comics for a year-and-a-half. That was a real cartoony thing. I had always wanted to do Spider-Man or something. I did some stuff for Malibu. Then I stopped with comic books because I got busy here. With each of these characters I had developed an entire world that I wanted to tell. The only place I could tell it was in the ending sequence or in the attract-mode sequence which, unfortunately, doesn't get seen too often. Although we were getting tons of letters from people asking things like "Are there any members of the White Lotus Society hidden in the game (which was Liu Kang's group)?" It amazed us that all these players were so familiar with the story. I immediately said I wanted to do a comic book. I talked some people here into putting up the money and letting us produce a comic book that we sold through the game. The players could send in three dollars and receive the comic book. The comic did really well. Somebody at Malibu ordered the comic, and they expressed interest in doing it.

Sodaro: Do you have any input into the Malibu comic book?

Tobias: Yeah. I had a couple of conversations with Mark Paniccia the editor on the comic. We went back and forth, and we got a hold of Charles Marshall, the writer first. I had some pretty long phone conversations with him. In the final scripts that we approved, he hit it right on the head. I think he did an excellent job.

Sodaro: Would you have liked to have written or drawn the comic yourself?

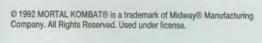
Tobias: I would have liked to have but with what I do here I just don't have the time.

Sodaro: Will you be contributing covers or anything?

Tobias: I might. We talked about that a little bit although the artist who they have, Patrick Rolo, is excellent. I'd enjoy seeing him do the covers. Mark had asked if I had any interest in doing that so I might do a cover here or there. The first couple of issues that Malibu's going to put out are a re-telling of the comic book that I did. It was 16 pages and I did it in like two weeks. Marshall did an excellent job. He embellished it and added some things. I'm real excited about what they're doing. I just received the rest of Patrick's pencils for the first issue and they look excellent.

Sodaro: What are you working on now?

Tobias: Right now I just finished *Mortal Kombat* II, and I'm currently working on a comic we're going to be selling through the game, kind of like the first one we did.







what's new Checklist November 1994 at the STAR TREK: DEED NINE® \$16: DE

As I sit here and eat my breakfast of Good and Plentys and Mountain Dew, I think back to what a crazy month this has been for all of us here in the Licensing Department. First there was the giant bat sighting, which most of us figured was a delusion brought on by sleep deprivation. Then there were

radioactive ants in the kitchen. and let's not forget that meteorite that landed near the office. Were we just seeing things because we're around comics. all the caffeine in our diet (I don't really think it's bad for you)? Is it true that staring at a computer all day will eventually erode that long, dangly thing that connects your brain to your spine? We just

gave up trying to

figure out what was going on and
went back to work, producing
(what I'm proud to say) a whole
lotta great books.

Well, all you Mortal K fans should be doing backflips of joy this month. We've got the regular series kickin' along, Goro comes to a close with its last issue before the Tournament Edition, a #0 issue with four short stories, plus other goodles, and a Special Edition of the first issue that includes an exclusive interview with the MK movie's director and producer. Pant, pant!

WATCH?

reaches of space. or the "final frontier" as many of us know it. we've got three Star Trek: Deep Space Nine goodies: the spectacular second issue of the crossover, a special follow-up to the hit miniseries Hearts and Minds, and our 16th issue is written by the pen of Star Trek novelist, John Vornholt.

Of course the well received Bruce Lee series continues, and there's a Rock-It comic featuring

YES, written by none other than the same person who writes these What's New at the 'Bu columns.





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